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JOHN L. CADWALADER

DIED MARCH 11, 1914

JOHN L. CADWALADER served continuously as Trustee of the Museum of Art for thirteen years. He never held office, though there is no office to which his associates would not have elevated him had he been willing to accept it. He was a member from time to time of almost every one of its standing committees, though never as chairman. He always preferred to have someone other than himself receive that title. But while his fellow-Trustees respected his wish not to accept office, they instinctively accorded him actual leadership. In recent years, whoever has been President, or whoever has been chairman of any committee, when any serious matter has been under consideration, it has always been his advice which has been sought and his conclusion which has been followed. Only those who have sat with him on the governing boards of this and other institutions can realize the extent of his influence. While holding himself modestly aloof from office, the intensity of his interest compelled him to take an active part in all important decisions. He was wont to say: "Now, I don't care how you decide this. I don't wish to influence your action at all." And he meant all he said. But he could rarely refrain from stating the different considerations which should govern action with such clearness as to point to an inevitable conclusion.

He was a vital force in Museum administration. He took a lively interest in all its affairs. No detail escaped his clearness of vision. Unrivalled in his knowledge of men and affairs, in his tact and in his foresight, again and again, though unwilling to be steersman, he touched the rudder with a firm hand and thus kept the ship on the right course.

The Museum was only one of several institutions to which John Cadwalader rendered the same kind of efficient service.

His chief interest was quite naturally centered in the New York Public Library, of which he had been induced to become President upon the death of his friend John Bigelow. It was he, if we mistake not, who conceived the plan of uniting the Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Libraries into a single great institution. It was under his diplomatic guidance that this plan, of such far-reaching consequence to the City of New York, had been carried out. It was quite natural that he should watch over its consummation. Next to the Public Library, however, the Museum was his chief concern. It was characteristic of him that when he had once taken up any enterprise he never ceased to labor in its behalf. The same was true of his innumerable helpful relations to friends and clients.

Cadwalader's influence, however, was not merely dependent on the logic of his reasoning or his lucidity of statement. It was rather in his personality. His associates instinctively felt that he was their friend as well as their adviser. In their intercourse with him they quite naturally dropped the "Mr.," not from any lack of respect, but from greater affection. It was to the John Cadwalader whom they loved, and who they knew loved them, that they turned when in trouble or in doubt, and they never failed to find in him friendship as well as counsel.

One of his friends very truly said of him that he belonged to the "small but ancient fraternity known as the Order of Gentlemen." He did, unless the term "gentleman" contains some implication of amiable weakness. There was no weakness about Cadwalader. Slight as he was in frame, and mild as he was in manner, he was the embodiment of courage whenever that quality was called into play. Say rather that he belonged to a still nobler order — the order of "Chevaliers, sans peur et sans reproche."

R. W. de F.